

filling sandbags as fast as they can do it. They are fortifying existing levees and creating levees to protect businesses and homes and valuable infrastructure.

I commend all the residents, volunteers, emergency workers, and the more than 400 members of the Illinois National Guard, who are working to brace our State for these floodwaters. Many people are working around the clock.

That is one of the nice things about this great Nation. I take special pride in the Midwest, which is where my roots are. When an emergency such as this arises, I have watched how people rally around and try to help.

Again, I was with Mayor Spring in Quincy on Friday. People were literally spending their entire day filling sandbags. It is hard work; many times it is back-breaking work, repetitive. But the spirit in that meeting place was as good as anyplace I have ever been. They all felt they were pulling together for their neighbors, their community, their city, and for their State. They felt a special kinship.

It is not unusual, of course, to see the great efforts of the Red Cross. They are always there trying to help people along, providing a sandwich and a bottle of water to the folks who need it when they are working. Also, other volunteers, including folks at a age where they could not pitch in and fill a sandbag, but they were making sandwiches and cookies to bring to the volunteers. It is that kind of a community outpouring that means so much.

The official Government agencies were sure there doing their part, including FEMA and our Illinois counterpart, coordinating the disaster response, along with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Over the weekend, two levees in our State—in the towns of Carman and Keithsburg—failed. Hundreds of residents in those towns have left their homes. Another levee broke last week in the town of Lawrenceville, on the east side of the State, and residents are stranded there without drinkable water.

Floodwaters are starting to seep into other towns along the river. Heavy rains are still falling north of us, pushing the river higher by the day.

Our Governor has already declared 15 counties in Illinois State disaster areas.

At the urging of Senator OBAMA and myself, Governor Blagojevich wrote to President Bush and asked him to declare a number of Mississippi River counties Federal disaster areas. Quincy is preparing for the worst. The river is expected to crest at 32 feet. One of the main concerns there is the water intake plants that provide water for the region. If it goes down, it may take months to restore it. That will be a hardship on a lot of people we hope to avoid.

I was with GEN Bill Enyart, head of the Illinois National Guard, Friday

night. I said: Bill, I hope that as a special project the Illinois National Guard will join with Mayor John Spring to try to protect that waterworks. It is important. Bill answered the call immediately and called Mayor John Spring and sent 100 members of the Air Force National Guard there to start sandbagging around the water treatment plant, trying to save it before the river crests on Wednesday. All those volunteers and emergency workers—even State prisoners released from the local prisons and correction camps—are working side by side to fill sandbags.

I also wish to say a word about State Senator John Sullivan in that area. He rolled up his sleeves immediately and went to work. I was with him Friday. He is roaming up and down the river trying to make sure he gives a helping hand where needed. He calls State and Federal agencies to see where they can be of assistance. He is a terrific public servant, and I was glad to be with him at that time.

Senator OBAMA came to Quincy over the weekend and looked at the situation and pitched in as well, filling sandbags, and he was able to see how our State is being affected.

The volunteers worked through Father's Day. The celebration with family was short-lived. They tried to do their best to tame the mighty Mississippi River. These volunteers are demonstrating amazing spirit. A flood is a devastating prospect to face and envision. But these folks have responded with resolve and determination. I am proud of them, and I am so proud to represent them. Their work may save homes, businesses, and lives. Every sandbag that is filled may make it much easier for communities to get back on their feet when the floodwaters recede.

State and local leaders in Illinois are also working around the clock to prepare for the worst. We know, from looking at neighboring States, that the severity of this flood will be more than the people of Illinois alone can absorb.

The magnitude of this disaster will require action from the Federal Government.

I have stood in Congress for over 20 years, and every time some section of our Nation has been victimized by a disaster, I have always felt that is when we come together as an American family, when we draw on our national treasure and the efforts of American workers across the country to come to the rescue of our neighbors in trouble. Well, now it is time for the Midwest to ask for that help.

I know this Congress and President will be forthcoming. They have done a good job so far. We have to make certain we give them all the tools they need to move quickly back home to prepare for the worst, to try to avoid tragedies that can be avoided, and then to clean up afterwards and get on with their lives.

Senator OBAMA and I will work with the Illinois congressional delegation to

ensure that the communities and the people affected do not face this disaster alone. America and this Congress and Senate will stand with them.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is now closed.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2008—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 6049, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act of 2008, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives for energy production and conservation to extend certain expiring provisions, to provide individual income tax relief, and for other purposes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, for the record, it is my understanding the time between now and 5:30, when we vote on the motion to proceed to the tax extenders, has been evenly divided between the Republican and Democratic sides.

I ask unanimous consent that all time—even time on the quorum calls—be credited to both sides equally during that period.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, in a couple of hours we are going to be voting again on cloture and we will be making a choice between two different points of view. We did this 2 weeks ago, a week ago last Thursday, and the result was that cloture was not invoked on the House-passed so-called tax extenders package, and I think the same result will end up being the case this evening.

It is essentially a choice between the Democratic leadership trying to do this in a partisan way by simply bringing up the House bill and trying to push that through, or getting together, as we have done in the past, in a bipartisan way, to ensure that the tax provisions we all support and we all want extended into law are done in a way that does not require that taxes be increased in some other part of the Tax Code.